CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

1-23. Canceled

24. (Original) A chip card, comprising:

a battery;

an external power source input for coupling to an external power source; and

a microprocessor being coupled to the external power source input and to the battery, said microprocessor trickle charging the battery when an external power source is coupled to the external power source input.

25. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the microprocessor includes at least one digital output port, which is coupled to the battery.

26. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the microprocessor transmits a series of digital pulses to the battery when the external power source is coupled to the external power source input.

27. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the microprocessor transmits a pseudorandom sequence of digital pulses to the battery when the external power source is coupled to the external power source input.

28. (Original) A method for charging a battery comprising:

coupling the battery terminals to a microprocessor output port; and

transmitting a digital signal to the battery from the microprocessor port when the microprocessor is powered from a power source other than the battery.

29. (Original) The method according to claim 28, further comprising transmitting a pseudorandom sequence of digital pulses to the battery.

30. (Original) The method according to claim 28, wherein the battery comprises a thin film battery with a solid electrolyte.

31. (Original) The method according to claim 28, further comprising connecting the terminals of the battery directly to the microprocessor output port without intermediate devices.

32. (Original) The method according to claim 28, further comprising connecting the terminals of the battery directly to the microprocessor output port through a diode.

33. Canceled

34. (Currently Amended) The chip card according to claim ~~33~~ 36, wherein said electrolyte comprises lithium phosphorus oxynitride.

35. (Currently Amended) The chip card of claim ~~33~~ 36, wherein the battery comprises a lithium anode having a layer of lithium phosphorus oxynitride thereon.

36. (Currently Amended) A chip card, comprising:

a thin film battery having a solid-state electrolyte, wherein said battery is hermetically sealed within the card;

a volatile memory unit;

an external power source input for coupling to an external power source; and

a microprocessor being coupled to the external power source input and to the battery, said microprocessor trickle charging the battery when an external power source is coupled to the external power source input, ~~The chip card of claim 33,~~ wherein the microprocessor is coupled to the external power source input and to the battery, and wherein the microprocessor is adapted to trickle charge the battery when an external power source is coupled to the external power source input.

37. (Currently Amended) The chip card of claim ~~33~~ 36, wherein the battery is in electrical contact with said volatile memory unit by way of first and second conductive elements, said first and second conductive elements being of opposite polarity, wherein said volatile memory unit is encapsulated in an epoxy resin, and wherein said first and second conductive elements are also encapsulated in an epoxy resin in the vicinity of said volatile memory unit.